396 is also cut out with a hatchet so as to decrease the thickness of the walls and render them more elastic.

When the pirogue is as wide as is desired, or else as wide as the wood being used will allow without any danger of splitting or bursting, strong rectangular crossbraces are set at regular intervals and tailed into the sides of the pirogues a few centimeters below the gunwales. When it has reached this state the pirogue is virtually finished. It has its final shape, and looks like the elongated half of a fish which has been split lengthwise.

All that remains is to finish the work by giving the bottom and sides the requisite thickness, by polishing the wood, smoothing the curves, etc.

Finally comes the moment of launching. It must be said, to the honor of the builders' sure eye and skill, that it is always successful and that once put into water the pirogue behaves well in its element, with a light and graceful balance.

396 The price of pirogues varies depending on their dimensions and [466] the region, and can therefore not be fixed in any absolute 439 fashion. A new pirogue, in fact, costs from 50 to 300 francs. In 435 Cambodia a pirogue from Laos costs twice what it cost in its land of origin. Thus it may readily be imagined that pirogues are exported from Lower Laos in fairly large numbers. The statistics for 1899 show exports of 552 pirogues of various dimensions, with a [Illustration here] total value of 55,195 francs, or an average purchase price of 100 francs apiece.

398 Cartwrights. The construction of carts, wagons, pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins is a specialized industry only on the right bank and in Siam. In French Laos carts are little used because of the nature of the terrain, and there are no cartwrights. Pack-saddles for oxen and elephant palanquins are made by nearly everyone, particularly by drovers and carnacs.

317 Lime. Lime is made in Laos, primarily for inclusion in betel masticatories.

276 [467] The kilns are dug in the clay on banks of watercourses, near calcareous masses from which limestone is taken.

272 Alcohol. The distillation of grain--rice, maize and hemp-seed--is not an industry in the strict sense, for every village and every family makes alcohol on occasion.